

WASHINGTON – Today, Congressman Mike Quigley (D-IL) issued this statement following an 11-2 vote by the Washington, D.C. City Council to legalize same-sex marriage:

“The struggle for equality has won a great victory in the shadow of our Capitol today. After a setback in Maine last month, the D.C. City Council has renewed this nation’s commitment to civil rights for every American—no matter who they love. The significance of this vote carries historical implications. The District of Columbia could be the first government south of the Mason-Dixon line to legalize gay marriage, bringing progress to a new frontier. One hundred and forty-eight years ago at Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln asked Americans if we truly meant it when our founders wrote that all people are created equal. Today, the City Council reaffirmed the answer is still ‘yes.’”

The bill will be voted on again in two weeks and then awaits the expected approval of D.C. Mayor Adrian M. Fenty. If signed into law, D.C. will join five states that currently allow gay couples to marry.

An emerging national advocate for the LGBT community, Quigley has cosponsored over a dozen bills that work toward equality during his first 150 days in office. Immediately after being sworn in this past April, Quigley's first act in Congress was to co-sponsor the Hate Crimes bill, not long after which he called for the repeal of the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy and joined Reps. Barney Frank, Tammy Baldwin, and Jared Polis to introduce the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. Quigley also sent a personal letter to President Obama urging him to include same-sex marriages in the 2010 Census and most recently stood with fellow cosponsors at an event to introduce the Respect for Marriage Act, legislation to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

Most recently, Quigley stood up in strong support for a bill to provide benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees by successfully introducing and passing an amendment to illustrate how extending fairness and equity to all employees will in fact help the government recruit and retain talented individuals.

Quigley is a member of the Congressional Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Equality Caucus. Back at home, he has formed a district LGBT Advisory Council of community leaders to function as a resource on important issues as well. Over sixty community leaders are already active members of the Council.

Quigley was recently inducted into the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Fame as a Friend of the Community.